



Student Night Speed Networking

Think of speed dating with a professional twist.

Career Speed Networking creates an opportunity for industry professionals to meet and share their career experiences with current students. Chicago Section IFT and associated industry groups are invited to share personal career-related stories and job tips with current students in a fun and interactive environment.

Information for Mentors

Join the Speed Networking Event as a mentor. Sharing personal, career-related stories and job tips is a great way to help current students interested in food science in their job search and future career.

What to expect

Speed Networking is divided into 12, 10-minute sessions. As a mentor, you will be assigned a table and matched with two to four students. You will introduce yourself and the students will then ask you career-related questions. Each round, students will be prompted to move to a new table to meet a different mentor.

At the cocktail reception that follows, you may continue discussions started during the speed-networking segment.

How to prepare

Bring your business cards to share with students.

Prepare an introduction that provides a snapshot of your professional background, experience, and current work situation. Considering sharing highlights of your professional career.

Information for Students/Mentees

Modeled after the speed dating concept, students have two hours—divided into 12, 10-minute sessions—to meet and pose questions for any of the mentors about the job market and their professional pursuits.

What to expect

Groups of two to four students will be paired with a mentor to ask questions and pick up job search and career tips. Every 10 minutes, the students will move to a different mentor for another round of networking. An informal cocktail reception and dinner will follow, where you may continue discussions started during the speed networking session.



This event is not a career fair or job recruitment opportunity. However, the wealth of information and career tips provided by industry professionals can help you build and develop your future career.

How to Prepare

To maximize this networking opportunity and make the event more meaningful, we suggest that you:

- Come prepared with a short list of questions for mentors. Choose two or three and use them as guidelines.
- Be open-minded. Expect to learn, build your career network, and have fun.
- Bring a pen and paper or PDA to take notes.
- Be prepared to offer some information about your interests, talents, skills, accomplishments and/or goals.
- Practice a brief introduction or “elevator speech” which can be delivered in 20-30 seconds.
- Bring business cards. Your card should contain contact information and could contain a web link to your LinkedIn profile or resume. You can also bring copies of your resume and share them as appropriate.
- Follow up after the event with the contacts you make. Send an email, thank them for specific advice and include a reminder of who you are by sharing your LinkedIn page.

Sample questions

- What is your job like? What happens in a typical day?
- What duties and responsibilities does your job involve?
- What kind of problems do you deal with?
- Why did this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
- How did you get your job?
- How would someone get an entry-level job in your field?
- Based on what I’ve told you about my interests and skills, can you think of any roles for which I might be suited in this industry?
- What skills are most critical to success in the work you are currently doing?
- What is the most challenging aspect of your current job?
- What do you love most about your job?
- Is there anything you dislike about your job?
- What advice would you give to someone who is interested in your field?
- What areas of this industry will offer the greatest opportunity in the coming years?
- Do you have any advice about potential internships or jobs in your area of the industry?